



Europe Day (9 May, 2023, 11 am)

Remarks by Consul General Hanna Pappalardo

Also on behalf of Gabriele Visentin, the Chief of the EU Delegation in Canberra, of Angelo Gioè, the Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Melbourne and of the Consular Corps in Melbourne, welcome to the Consulate General of Italy to celebrate, through art, Europe, its founding values and the enduring significance of the European Integration project and of the European cultural heritage

I would like to start by acknowledging the Kulin nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who might be here today

I would like to offer the Acknowledgement also in Italian

Riconosciamo la nazione Kulin, Custode Tradizionale del territorio su cui ci incontriamo quest'oggi. Rendiamo omaggio ai loro Anziani, passati e presenti, ed estendiamo oggi questo rispetto a tutte le persone aborigene e indigene delle isole dello Stretto di Torres eventualmente presenti

Ladies and Gentlemen

before I continue with my remarks let's have a look altogether at a short introductory video realized by the European External Action Service on the Day of Multilateralism which I believe fits very well in our celebrations as an appropriate opening statement

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are gathered to mark the Day when the seeds of what the European Union is today were planted with the signing, on 9 May 1950, of the „Schuman Declaration“ that set out the idea for a new form of political cooperation in Europe, which would make war between Europe's nations unthinkable

So why celebrate at the Consulate General of Italy?

For three good reasons

First: The dream of a united and free Europe actually was articulated already in 1941 with the historic „Ventotene Manifesto“, as it became known later on, written shortly before the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union

Its authors were three Italians, Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi and Eugenio Colorni, all of them exiled in the Italian Island of Ventotene for their opposition to fascism

They developed a new vision based on the idea of shared sovereignty: that of a Europe united by a customs-free common market, a currency, and freedom of movement for workers. They also called for a political union endowed with its own foreign policy and armed forces

Second: On 25 March 1957, the Founding Treaties of the European Union were signed in Rome

Third: On the 4th of May of last week, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Antonio Tajani, delivered the keynote speech for the 2023 edition of the State of the Union, one of the most important political events of the EU which takes place annually at the European University Institute in Florence, under the motto: „Building Europe in Times of Uncertainty“

In his speech, Minister Tajani highlighted that the journey is far from over because the world needs more Europe and more international cooperation than ever to face the daunting challenges to the rules based order posed,

among others, by the brutal invasion of Ukraine. He has also underscored that Italy is strongly committed to advance our common cause and the defense of our shared values

It is against this background that I hope you will all agree on the crucial role that international diplomacy can play in this context, because progress can move backwards and we cannot take the achievements of the past 70 years for granted

Opening of the Exhibition

“Joining art with the foundational values of the European people which are universal values”

This is the spirit that has inspired 16 major Italian illustrators to describe the history of the European integration project through images depicting six basic universal values - respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights - as well as several key topics of the European debate: community, work, culture, peace, environment, science, and inclusion

The Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has embraced this initiative by celebrating, with an exhibition, Europe Day across its diplomatic-consular network and Institutes of Culture around the world

The works display the communicative power of Italian illustration, the strength of silent storytelling, shedding light on the ability of each artist to propose their own vision. This is accomplished through a message which is accessible to everyone and will remain impressed upon the memory of each of us

Recalling the special role played by Italy in the making of the European Union as it is today, I would like to draw your attention to two illustrations in particular, the first dedicated to the concept of community, inspired by the 1957 Treaties of Rome, and the second based on the essay “For a Free and United Europe. A Draft Manifesto,” the Ventotene Manifesto

I declare the exhibition open